(c) the details of those granted this professorship, during the last three years?

THt MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR.(SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a)Yes, Sir.

(b) According to the information furnished by UGC, the scheme is intended to utilize the services of highly qualified and experienced superannuated teachers in universities, colleges and institutions approved under Sections 2(0 and 12(b) of the UGC Act without any restriction of position or pay scales and who have been actively engaged in research and teaching programmes of the UGC in the preceding years to enable them to pursue active research in their respective fields of specialization.

The fellowship will be available for a period of two years or upto the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. The eligibility will be based on the previous contributions to research and publications of the applicants. The applicants will be required to send their best two publications/research papers for evaluation to the experts alongwith their request. The number of fellowships awarded per year depend on the grants available. No extension under the scheme is admissible and hence the proposal should be such that it is possible to complete it under the scheme.

(c) The details of those selected during the last three years'is as follows:—

1999-2000	107
2000-2001	100
2001-2002	78

Banning the use of children as soldiers

3411. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has not taken any decision so far regarding the United Nations Treaty for banning the use of children as soldiers, a major violation of human rights;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of the United Nations Treaty; and

(d) how many countries have agreed to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRAMAHAJAN): (a) to (d)The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child involving children in armed conflict obliges State Parties to take feasible measures to ensure that minimum age of recruitment to armed forces is raised to 15 years and that the members of their armed forces, who have not attained the age of 18 years, do not take a direct part in hostilities and also to ensure that the persons, who have not attained the age of 18 years, are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces. As per the information received from Ministry of Defence the minimum age of recruitment of soldiers in the army is 16 years. Persons recruited undergo basic military training for upto two and a half years from the date of enrolment and are then inducted into regular service. No recruit below the age of 18 years is deployed in armed conflict. There is no compulsory recruitment in India. According to the UNICEF website only 18 countries have ratified the Protocol. The implications of ratification are receiving the attention of Government.

Conversion of Degree Colleges into Autonomous Colleges

3412. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that University Grants Commission is in the process of converting a number of degree colleges into autonomous colleges;

(b) if so. the colleges so identified in Rajasthan;

(c) The amount spent by UGC for infrastructure and various development activities;

(d) whether UGC is reviewing their performance after releasing funds; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) The scheme of autonomous colleges, evolved with a view to providing academic freedom to colleges, has been under operation for quite some time. Under the scheme, autonomous status is granted to deserving colleges on the merits of each case. 130 colleges, spread over 29 universities in eight States, have so far been given the status of autonomous college.

(b) According to the information furnished by the University Grants Commission, no proposal for grant of autonomous status to any college in Rajasthan has so far been received from the State Government.